

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Extension Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

July 16, 1947

For your information

TO STATE FARM LABOR SUPERVISORS OF FLORIDA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, DELAWARE, PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, CONNECTICUT, TENNESSEE, AND OHIO

Subject: Atlantic Coast Migratory Movement

THE SITUATION

THE EASTERN SHORE: In Virginia the potato season is drawing to a close in the lower end of the area, but digging is still heavy in the upper section. Some crews are leaving for points in New Jersey. Tomatoes will be ready the week of July 21, and crop prospects are good. Effort is being made to provide interim work for workers who have finished work in potatoes and who will be needed in tomatoes for the balance of the season.

Maryland. Eastern Shore counties have hit a peak in crop volume. Potato and bean harvest will be finished this week. Picking tomatoes will start this week, and sweet corn harvest will begin in upper shore counties. Under the Maryland sweet corn deal, crews may be broken up into smaller groups who are paid by the ton for pulling corn. Crew loaders are paid by the ton to haul corn to the processing plant. Bill Hillman reports 3,500 workers in the area, about half of whom are in labor camps. The supply of workers is ample for indicated harvest needs.

In Delaware the string bean season is at its height. Crop is heavy and some market resistance being encountered. Labor on hand is sufficient for beans. Tomatoes will start July 15 to 20 in Sussex and Kent Counties and about July 28 in New Castle County. There will be an urgent need for from 50 to 100 workers to start in tomatoes and sweet corn in New Castle County about August 1, with some later additional demand. Workers will be housed in the new Middletown Camp which has excellent accommodations, including clinic and nursing facilities. This camp is now open. Communicate with Kenneth Branner, Camp Manager, Telephone - Middletown, Delaware, 92.

NEW JERSEY: Heavy potato digging will start about August 1. Early beans are finished in South Jersey, but picking is increasing in other sections. Some work now picking fresh market tomatoes. Picking tomatoes for cannery processing should start about July 25. "Jock" Taylor reports needs for small crews for tomatoes and peach picking by that date.

NEW YORK reports about 2,600 southern migrants in farm labor camps as of July 1. Indications are now that demands for labor in August and September will be heavy. Merle Stout is in New York arranging placements in cooperation with local farm labor personnel and growers. He can be reached through Elton Hanks' office, Telephone - Ithaca 3331, which will relay calls to Stout in the field.

C. W. E. Pittman is in New York State for several days getting firsthand information on future requirements for migrant labor and laying the ground work for getting migrants back to Florida next fall when and as needed.



WHAT'S AHEAD?

The next two or three weeks will see the demand for migrant farm labor at its peak on the Eastern Shore and in New Jersey. Indications are now that for the season the supply of migrants in this area will be sufficient with not too much in the way of surpluses or shortages other than for short interim periods between crops. Some surplus labor is now moving out of North Carolina and the Virginia Shore counties. Some of these workers without commitments in New Jersey and New York may create a temporary surplus in Maryland. August 1 demands in Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey should absorb this surplus. A few crews have returned to Florida. The big job ahead is to provide for even distribution of workers needed in these States for the peak season and at the same time estimate and meet the heavy needs which New York will apparently have within a few weeks.

This calls for the closest sort of cooperation between farm labor personnel in the States involved in the movement. It's not enough to work to get labor into your own areas of need. We are still working under the masthead of "Cooperative Extension Work." Every farm labor official has a responsibility to keep co-workers in adjoining States advised of farm labor conditions, and to be prepared to assist in maintaining an orderly movement of all surplus labor to areas of greater need. Northern States will later have the responsibility of releasing some labor for early needs in Florida. Florida officials played ball in releasing labor about as needed in the north this spring. They are entitled to the same courtesy from northern officials in returning labor this fall. State Supervisors should remind county agents and farm labor assistants of the importance of filling out and forwarding the Crew Record Slips which have been provided for this purpose this year.

WE NEED TO KNOW

What plans are being made for possible late harvest dates in western New York, and for plantings of late beans on the Eastern Shore and in North Carolina, and which might delay the return of some labor to Florida. Remember this in sending us information for this letter.

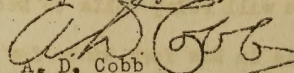
WE DO KNOW

That Labor Branch Camps operated for domestic labor cannot be operated by the Labor Branch beyond September 30 due to lack of funds. However, growers' associations may obtain use permits to operate these camps until the end of this season.

And that long hauls of foreign workers are being eliminated. The Labor Branch does not contemplate sending any foreign workers into Florida for the late sugar harvest. This could mean that there will be unusual demands for more migrants to return to Florida at earlier dates than usual.

Putting what We Need to Know and what We Do Know together, it becomes evident that we may be called upon to exert the same skills and techniques in directing migrants south as we have been employing in the past in the northern migration.

Very truly yours,

  
A. D. Cobb

Northeastern Area Director  
Recruitment and Placement Division  
Extension Farm Labor Program